

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please amend Claim 1 as follows. Insertions are shown underlined while deletions are ~~struck-through~~

1 (previously presented): An aqueous coating composition comprising, as essential components, a synthetic resin emulsion (A) having a pH value of 4.0 to 10.0 and a neutral silica sol (B) having a particle diameter of 1 to 200 nm and a pH value of 5.0 to 7.8, wherein the neutral silica sol (B) component is contained in an amount of 0.1 to 50 parts by weight in terms of solid content relative to 100 parts by weight of the solid content of the synthetic resin emulsion (A), and the electrical conductivity of the neutral silica sol (B) is 1 mS/cm or less wherein the neutral silica sol (B) includes particles made of a compound which is formed by hydrolysis condensation of silicate, is rigid, and has silanol groups (Si-OH) on the surfaces of the particles and the neutral silica sol has been subjected to hydrophobation treatment.

2 (original): The aqueous coating composition according to claim 1, which further comprises aggregate (E) having a particle diameter of 0.05 to 5 mm in an amount of 100 to 4000 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the solid content of the synthetic resin emulsion (A).

3 (original): The aqueous coating composition according to claim 1, which further comprises a coloring pigment (C), an extender pigment (D), and aggregate (E) having a particle diameter of 0.05 to 5 mm such that 1 to 300 parts by weight of the coloring pigment (C), 10 to 1000 parts by weight of the extender pigment (D) and 10 to 2000 parts by weight of the aggregate (E) are contained per 100 parts by weight of the solid content of the synthetic resin emulsion (A).

4 (original): The aqueous coating composition according to claim 1, which further comprises at least one kind of colored coating (F) dispersed in a granular state.

5 -20 (canceled)

21 (previously presented): The aqueous coating composition according to claim 1, wherein the neutral silica sol (B) contains two or more kinds of neutral silica sol (B) different in average primary particle diameter.

22 (previously presented): The aqueous coating composition according to claim 1, wherein the neutral silica sol (B) has a particle diameter of 10 to 50 nm.

23 (previously presented): The aqueous coating composition according to claim 1, wherein the hydrophobation treatment is carried out by complexing a compound having at least one functional group selected from the group consisting of Alkoxy silane compound, Alcohols, Glycols, Glycol ethers, and Fluorine alcohols with the neutral silica sol (B).

24 (currently amended): The aqueous coating composition according to claim 1, wherein the neutral silica sol (B) is complexed with a polyoxyalkylene group-containing compound.-

25 (previously presented): The aqueous coating composition according to claim 1, wherein the silicate from which the neutral silica sol (B) component is produced is selected from the group consisting of tetramethoxy silane, tetraethoxy silane, tetra-n-propoxy silane, tetraisopropoxy silane, tetra-n-butoxy silane, tetraisobutoxy silane, tetra-sec-butoxy silane, tetra-t-butoxy silane, tetraphenoxy silane or condensates thereof.

26 (previously presented): The aqueous coating composition according to claim 25, wherein the silicate from which the neutral silica sol (B) component is produced further comprises an alkoxy silane compounds dimethoxydiethoxy silane, methyltrimethoxy silane, methyltriethoxy silane, ethyltrimethoxy silane, ethyltriethoxy silane, dimethyldimethoxy silane, and diethyldimethoxy silane.